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if it had turned out badly for Kuropatkin, less harm would have ensued than most people would have supposed!

The monarchistic views, the hard practicality, the somewhat arrogant spirit of the man, are not emphasized with any intent to belittle him. His services to his country were prodigious; he was no doubt "the most intelligent man in Russia," and he was also entirely honest. He was a great statesman—as great as the Russia of his time could conceivably produce. The striking fact is that even a Witte could not succeed. He failed, not because he was an ultra-liberal, an idealist, a great reformer; for he was none of these things. He failed *in spite of the fact* that he was upon the whole conservative, absolutely loyal to the Czar, hard-hearted, strong-willed to the point of brutality, able at all times to see things exactly as they were. To read the life of such a man, to appreciate the senseless attitudes he had to contend with, is to gain a new insight into the Russia of the Old Régime. Witte's views, apart from his bitter characterizations of opponents—and these are, no doubt, exact enough—are of large interest. His diagnosis of Russian public opinion at the time of the First Soviet, for example, is remarkably clear and convincing—different groups all wanting, nominally, the same thing, but wanting it for different reasons, each for a narrow or selfish motive. Here one finds the true explanation of the lack of Russian unity. But the man's whole life, the sort of man he was,—these considerations are as illuminating as any of Witte's judgments or revelations. That Witte could not save it is almost the final commentary on the Czardom. Russia, perhaps, did not deserve a Washington or a Lincoln. But Providence sent her Witte. As soon, however, as the Government felt itself safe from the immediate danger of revolution it practically banished its savior.

"I am neither a Liberal nor a Conservative," Witte was wont to say. "I am simply a man of culture. I cannot exile a man to Siberia merely because he does not think as I do, and I cannot deprive him of civil rights because he does not pray in the same church as I do.' But he was too advanced a thinker for the Russia of his day.

THE LIFE OF WHITELAW REID. By Royal Cortissoz. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

When Whitelaw Reid became editor and proprietor of the *Xenia News*, on July 23, 1858, he was not yet twenty years of age. It is characteristic of him that he at once made this small-town newspaper a force. He had even then an uncommon power of analyzing great issues, and his work in the campaign for Lincoln "stamped him," says his biographer, "as an effective journalist." But it was not merely as an editorial writer that Reid was finding himself. He had an instinct for news, and while catering intelligently to a public that sincerely wanted to know "the best that had been thought and said in the

world," he printed whatever had the greatest interest for the greatest number. Thus, he got out an extra on the great Heenan-Sayres prize-fight, remarking editorially, "The simple truth is that everybody is interested in the fight and everybody reads about it." The one stable feature of the paper was a collection of pure literature—the poetry of Whittier, Lowell, Bayard Taylor, and Bryant; fragments from British and American novelists or essayists. Yet an early issue bears the announcement that "a great deal of matter is crowded out this week by the report of the murder trial which will be found in our columns." He printed with a "scare-head" the despatches announcing the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable. "That," says Mr. Cortissoz, "was the kind of news he craved." There was, in short, nothing naïve about the *Xenia News*. It did not in the least resemble the crude country weekly of humorous tradition. It was the work of an unusually intellectual and also an uncommonly enterprising young newspaper man.

His genius as a journalist, proved by his success as a war correspondent in the field and as a reporter in Washington, was early recognized by Horace Greeley, who fairly insisted upon having Reid as his right-hand man on the *Tribune*. Promoted to what was practically the post of managing editor, he at once demonstrated his inborn fitness for the task. His judicious supervision left the utmost freedom to a good workman; his power of winning loyalty and creating enthusiasm was matched by the thoroughness of his attention to details. It is said of him that "there never was an editor quite like him with a blue pencil, so swift to see where an article could profitably be cut, so skilled in the art which Mr. Howells once described as the art of 'joining the bleeding parts.'" His influence was scarcely, if at all, less than that of Greeley, but his conception of his function was sounder and more modern. He was a "personal journalist" with a difference—not, as his biographer well says, "an oracular editor," but rather "an editorial oracle."

Yet it is not as a journalist that Reid chiefly impresses the reader of his biography. If he was a born newspaper man, he had also, like Delane of the *London Times*, as Mr. Cortissoz points out, a "genius for politics." The particular significance of his life-record seems to be that it is the story of one who not only influenced public opinion but guided events by his counsels. His participation in "the great game of President-making, of unremitting activity in national, State, and local politics," stretches from Lincoln to Roosevelt. Throughout his career he is distinguished by an unusual blending of high aims with practical insight. He thus stands a little apart from those of his contemporaries and associates who were chiefly newspaper men, chiefly men of culture, chiefly politicians. And it is not altogether due to any partiality on the part of his biographer that he seems to furnish an excellent standard by which to measure the others. It is a sign of his sanity that while he was jealous of his independence and not sparing of criticism, he was able to keep his friends and to work within his party. A most valuable type of citizen surely—the public man who joins a lofty conception of duty to a *flair* for the

political game, who knows when to play the part of Warwick, but has no excessive fondness for the rôle of King-maker.

Independent Reid undoubtedly was, but in a purely pragmatical way. Independence was not with him a religion. He was not a Mugwump, but a party man. "He upheld what he called 'the sacred right of bolting and scratching' not as a fetich, but as the practical resource forced upon honest men by actual conditions." Similarly he was skeptical in regard to new parties. "Parties," he told the readers of the *Tribune*, "are not made; they grow." If he broke with the Republican Party for a few years, he did so not in spleen but simply because he found it necessary to fight Grant and his people, and because he saw that he could do this to the best advantage from the outside.

Thus, his whole course of action seems remarkably consistent. He changed neither his principles nor his practical creed of expediency. He was faithful to both when he declined to be lured back prematurely into the fold. It was represented to him that if the *Tribune* would only say, "Blind and reprehensible as are many of the acts of the Republican Party, it is still the great party, etc.—As for the Democracy—salary grabber nominated for Speaker, etc.—there isn't salt enough to save it, etc."—if the *Tribune* would only take this line, it might lead the party and have an influence and circulation unparalleled in journalism. Reid's character and his perspicuity were more than equal to the occasion. "Practically," he told his correspondent, "we have said again and again all that they suggest to you. . . . Their actual wish is that the *Tribune* should squarely defend Grant and the Administration against assailants. Their grudge against the *Times* is that it has refused to do it in certain flagrant instances."

On the whole, it is remarkable how little purely interpretative work Mr. Cortissoz has found it necessary to do in elucidating Reid's character and achievements. It is only occasionally that the biographer finds it advisable to guard against a misunderstanding. He needs scarcely more than mention the legend that Reid abetted Chase in his rivalry with Lincoln: in fact the story of the relations between Chase and Reid reflects credit upon both men. It is easy enough to show that Reid was in no way responsible for Greeley's Presidential ambitions. "While Reid did more than any other single man to promote Greeley's candidacy, *once it was launched*, he did not invent it, nor did it, in the stages preliminary to launching, wholly commend itself to his judgment." In the narrative, there is much politics, but little material, apparently, for controversy. Mainly Reid's words and actions speak for themselves. "My aim," writes Mr. Cortissoz, "has been to show from documentary sources what Whitelaw Reid thought and did, and in so doing to make plain the man that he was." He has, in fact, written the political history of a period, with Reid as its central figure—a record painstaking and exact, showing the man in his setting. The biographer, though adequately appreciative of character, seems generally to resist any temptation to indulge in anything like personality sketches, with the result that better proportion

and emphasis are attained than would be possible in a more colorful presentation. Reid is emphasized, not eulogized. When Mr. Cortissoz gives us his own impressions—as when he describes the files of the *Xenia News* as a window opening upon Reid's early life, or when he points out that Reid's activities in connection with Greeley's nomination were the real beginning of his success as a diplomatist—he really gives helpful hints toward the understanding of his subject. But for the most part this sort of thing is not needed. The facts are salient. The whole narrative is remarkably clear-cut, definite, and convincing. One cannot help feeling that this workmanlike, thoroughly informed biography is just the kind of record that Reid himself would have approved.

GREAT AMERICAN ISSUES. By John Hays Hammond and Jeremiah W. Jenks. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Whether we like it or not, we all have to attend the school of political experience. We may be, and often are, dull or indifferent pupils, but here we are, in the school. We are for the most part ill provided with text books; there is no lack of books designed for those who go to the lesser schools, but there are few precisely suited to the needs of the student in the biggest school of all. Here we have to learn what we can by observation and reflection. The lessons for the day are always the urgent issues of the time, and the discussions that go on about these are usually neither systematic nor fundamental.

Great American Issues is essentially an educational book—a book for thinking people who know that their student days did not really end when they graduated from high school or college. It is extremely well suited to the needs of thoughtful citizens. True, a book might be written on any one of the subjects dealt with in its several chapters—the struggle for good government, labor and capital, the standard of living, unemployment, immigration, competition and big business, the tariff, to name a few. But what the authors have aimed at has been, apparently, to present only the essential considerations and to draw only the obviously legitimate conclusions. In this they have been conspicuously successful. Necessarily condensed, and a little dogmatic in tone, the book is no mere primer, but a sober discussion written in an interesting and even a challenging style.

What wins confidence is the breadth of view of the authors combined with their willingness to pronounce definitely upon questions which, though still more or less debatable, are ripe for summing up. There is evidently not only a fresh overhauling of the questions studied but a judicious weighing of the best opinions. And the premises are sound. "Those who follow this discussion throughout," say the authors, "will realize that the power behind all political, social and business enterprises is the individual man. They will see that hope for better democracy, better society, and better business, lies after all in a better breed of men." Modern conditions, however, require modern